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Chief, EE

16 August 1957

Chief, CACROZE

Info: COS
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Operational/CALL/Liaison

File: RMHILLATE Views of Defense Ministry Strauss and the Defense EstablishmentREF: A. EOIA-254
B. EOIA-257

ACTION REQUIRED: None. For your information and dissemination.

DATE INFO ACQUIRED: 9-13 August 1957

1. Defense Minister Strauss: Reportedly Strauss is much criticised in the Bonn military circles. RMHILLATE stated that Strauss has become acutely aware of the complexities of the Defense Ministry and his position. The only reason, according to RMHILLATE, that Strauss fought for this position is that the Defense Ministry is the largest and strongest Ministry and handles better than a third of the entire budget. No other Ministry can offer a better political ladder. However Strauss has been unpleasantly surprised about the defense problems which are fraught with conflicting issues. In view of this, plus his almost full-time preoccupation with CSU politics, Strauss devotes very little time to matters military. Whenever it does become necessary for him to make a defense decision, it is weighed and decided on its political consequences and how it might affect Strauss's politics, rather than on any military consideration.

2. Inspector General - Chief of Staff of Combined Services - This position has full command authority over the defense service chiefs. The present chief of staff is simultaneously the chairman of the Joint Chiefs who sits with the Defense Council (Verteidigungsrat) composed of the Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, Ministers of Finance, Interior, and Defense.

3. Defense Establishment - The Bonn Defense Establishment from the Chief of Staff down to each department and service is composed of a total of 2,300 personnel of which 1,000 are officers. Brigadier General Panitaki is Chief of Staff and presently Deputy to the Chief of Staff. He is reported to be a very capable officer. *

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4. Commitment to NATO:

a. Present - 3 Corps Headquarters; 3 Divisions, one of which is 65 per cent up to combat strength and the other two divisions nearly 80 per cent.

b. Planned - 2 Tank Divisions up to 80 per cent of combat strength to be turned over in December 1957. One Mountain and one Paratroop Division to be turned over in 1958. The balance of divisions to be made available during 1959-60.

c. Command Relationship - NATO inspection rights and suggested corrective recommendations are made through the German Chief of Staff. Thus far no suggestions have been made concerning training of troops. Some suggestions have been made concerning the assignment of units within NATO, the most recent of which was rejected. (The Division in Regensburg was suggested to be moved to the area of Stuttgart. The German Chief of Staff turned this suggestion down as unworkable in view of the political repercussions. It seems that the majority of the German units are made up of troops from the area where the unit is located).

5. Territorial Defense Forces

(Please see Foreign Service Dispatch No. 183 25 July 1957 from American Embassy Bonn to the Department).

Planning has been underway for some time to establish a Territorial Defense Force of considerable size. In peace time it is planned to develop a nucleus of 30,000 officers and men (many of whom will be drawn from conscriptees who have served their tours). It is planned that this force will be capable of mobilizing 250,000-300,000 strong in time of war. The mission of the Territorial Forces is designed primarily for internal defenses, protection of communication zones, vital installations, rail junctions, plants etc. More on this subject is reported in the Foreign Service Dispatch.

6. Problems

a. Guided Missiles versus Jet Aircraft Interceptors: Almost immediately following the elections, the Defense Ministry must conclude whether the majority of DM 5 Billion will be used for delivery of jet interceptors by 1960 or if most of this money should be utilized for guided missiles. RNMELLATE favors guided missiles with some interceptor support, even though the former is much more expensive. This decision will be made primarily by RNMELLATE. The question of adequate airfields and runways is very much related to this decision. Reportedly the air force is to have one field for each of its 463 squadrons. RNMELLATE claims it is impossible to provide that many. Also connected with this is the general build up of the air force. If technological developments continue

at the same pace in the future, intercontinental air warfare can be fought without pilots, extensive runways, etc. some time perhaps in the not too distant future.

b. Personnel - The Defense Ministry is confronted with a serious problem of obtaining adequate numbers of volunteers. The latter have been dropping off rapidly in the last few months. RUMELIATE believes this is at least partly attributable to the upcoming elections. There is no legislation in existence which permits an expansion of the conscriptee program to offset the losses of volunteers.

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* Please note Paragraph 7, EGM-640, which is seriously doubted.

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